

OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS

*Navy Chaplains are frequently invited to offer prayers of invocation and benediction for various **OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS**, occasions or events. The following prayers provide examples of what some military chaplains have done.*



Photo by PHC Thomas M. Henslev

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PRAYERS FOR OFFICIAL CEREMONIES

CHANGE OF COMMAND

We pray, O Creator of the world without and the world within, asking that these moments be more than a ceremonious exercise, but rather a heartfelt expression of joy and praise for Your presence among us and as a sense of the possibility and purpose which Your spirit instills within our hearts. We thank You, O Lord, for the Wisdom inherent in the change of command ceremony, creating within us, as it does, a sense of continuity and strength amidst change.

We ask that You be with (Captains _____ and _____ whose authority to command we acknowledge, confirm, and pass on this day. Cause them to be proactive to the responsibilities granted them and yet ever aware of their humanity. Let them know that we cheer them on and are thankful for their commitment and good will. Bless them and the men they serve, O Lord. Amen.

Lord God, Creator of the Universe, Our pride in past efforts causes us to stop on this occasion and give thanks. Today, we celebrate past achievements and ask Your support in a new beginning. May your presence, peace and care always accompany Captain _____ and his family. We pray that wisdom, compassion and creative leadership will mark the Command of Captain _____. May all our people impositions of authority be sensitive to the demands of the faith we entrust to them, and the needs of the people they serve. Amen.

Eternal Father, we ask Your continued blessing on the men and women of the (Command); the many individuals whose many sacrifices and dedication have shown them to be people of integrity and professionalism. We pray, Lord, that as a nation, our strength will be rooted in our commitment to justice and our constant quest for freedom for all of Your people. May every member of (Command) continue to be a clear, strong example of that commitment and that quest. Amen.

O Lord, let Your mercy be upon us, and let Your love be in our hearts. Guide us to know the truth in this life, and help us in the time of decision-making. O Lord, these officers are gathered here in a moment significant to them and to us -- to change command, to pass the baton, that they may serve effectively their nation and the Marine Corps. Guide them to know Your will at all times. Fill their mind with useful knowledge, and their hearts with compassion.

For You are good and to You we ascribe glory now and forever. Amen.

Almighty God, Creator and Sustainer of us all, as we begin this ceremony we invoke the power and presence of Your Holy Spirit. As the command passes from _____ to _____, may we be reminded of the responsibilities and opportunities of leadership, of the commitment and sacrifice of those who go down to the sea in ships, and of those families who support them.

Let us use this occasion to celebrate the ideals of freedom, courage, honor, and peace, and to dedicate ourselves anew to those values we hold so dear. In God's most holy name we offer our prayer. Amen.

Dear Father, as the torch of leadership is passed may this awesome responsibility be coupled with your blessing and wisdom and a consciousness of your presence. May our godly and patriotic duty be performed at our highest level of expertise. Now to the only wise God, who is able to keep you from falling, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, and may He keep you in the security of His presence. Amen.

Our Father God and Divine Creator, we ask for Thy blessing upon this change of command ceremony. May we once again be reminded of Thy concern for man and for the dignity of life that this nation and ship are dedicated to preserve. Bless those who lead us with wisdom and vision and strength. Particularly bless (Name) who departs for another assignment and (Name) who now becomes our new captain.

Grant to us all a sense of loyalty and trust in our way of life, our nation, our ship, and our captain. Amen.

Heavenly Father, we ask Your blessing upon all who are gathered here and pray that You be with us at this transfer of responsibilities. Inspire us with Your wisdom, that we may appreciate the true nature of command and the serious consequences that flow from it. May the spirit of justice, care, concern, and dedication to duty be CAPT_____ legacy to his shipmates of the USS_____. May You continue to be with him and his family as they leave to serve others.

We pray Your support for CAPT_____ as he assumes the burdens of command. May he feel a sense of confidence and assurance when he turns to You in those lonely moments of decision. Guide and direct him always that Justice, Truth, and the quest for Peace may be served.

We ask that You be present to us all, that all our actions may give honor and praise to Your Name in which we pray. Amen.

Father of us all, we pause to remind ourselves of Your presence, to render You honors, and to invoke Your blessing. We are present to witness a change of command, a transfer of power.

Jesus once said to a man in authority, "You have power only because it comes from God." Help us, Lord, to remember that power is Your gift: that its purpose is to accomplish Your will. Bless those who must command; bless those who must obey; that Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

God of our fathers, who kindled in us the love of liberty and granted us such faith and courage in Thee, that wide seas and strange shores were over passed and eagerly embraced. Bestow upon us, a love of liberty, and direct us by Thy hand, that we neither grow faint in faith nor fail in courage. Bless and guide those who now lead us in our nation's course... to him who goes to other duty and to him who comes to be our new captain. Guide them both with understanding and strength of purpose. With this we invoke Thy divine blessings upon these proceedings. Amen.

Eternal Father, Almighty God, we ask for Thy divine blessing upon this change of Command. May we be aware of Thy interest in such activities and thus strive to serve Thee and our country with added conviction. Bless always the men of this ship, those who command and those who carry out the commands. In the name of our Lord, we pray. Amen.

Eternal Father, Creator of land and sea, grant to us gathered here, an appreciation for responsibility and command. To all who are called to lead, bless with strength of purpose and courage. Keep them firm and yet understanding, wise and yet learning, brave but not foolhardy. May they be rocks of trust and confidence for those who follow them. Our special prayer today is for Thy divine blessings upon him who leaves us for another assignment and upon him who comes to receive command of this ship. May she always sail with pride in the free life she defends. Amen.

CHANGE OF COMMAND INVOCATION

O God, who art the confidence of all who dwell upon the earth and of them that are afar off upon the sea, hear our prayer for Thy servants who defend their country on the oceans and maintain justice and freedom. Safeguard their lives amid the violence of foes. Keep them strong in faith, in courage, and in self-control. Let Thy presence calm their minds in the hour of danger and hold them fast from temptation in times of ease. Enable them to fulfill their duty with fidelity throughout the voyage of life. Especially do we pray for our captain as he is relieved and as he assumes new duties, and for our new commanding officer as he assumes these responsibilities. Guide them both. We ask in Your name. Amen.

CHANGE OF COMMAND BENEDICTION

Our heavenly Father, we ask for Your benediction to rest on us this day. As You have graciously preserved our nation through the years and have led us in wondrous ways, grant that we may be worthy of our high calling as a nation. Make us reverent in the use of freedom, just in the exercise of power, and generous in the protection of weakness. Inspire the men and women who direct our nation so that they may guide it wisely and well. Especially do we pray for our former commanding officer as he moves to new responsibilities and for our new commanding officer. Grant them in all their duties, Your help; in all their perplexities, Your counsel; in all danger, Your protection; in all sorrow, Your peace. Amen.

Eternal Father, we pray that Your blessing might rest upon this ship, her commanding officer and this crew. May they face with courage the dangers of the sea and the menace of hostile forces. Bring them safely through all threats. Strengthen and sustain their families who endure the stress, the separation and the sacrifices required to transform these many individuals into one efficient crew. Grant to each of us Your grace. Grant to all of us Your peace. Amen.

SHIPBOARD CHANGE OF COMMAND

INVOCATION

Lord, for thousands of years brave sailors have set out to sea; during fair weather and foul, during peace time and war. No matter the time in history nor the circumstances, the pinnacle achievement for professional seafarers has been Command at Sea. This morning, we celebrate two model seafarers

who have realized that dream. This morning we honor two great seafarers who have earned this great responsibility through many years of professional dedication and sacrifice.

Lord as we today celebrate this time-honored Change of Command Ceremony, we ask Your special blessing to be upon CAPT _____ as he reluctantly ends another great chapter in his impeccable Naval career by passing on the baton of command. We aboard USS _____ are grateful for his leadership and example. May we who remain aboard honor him by continuing to uphold the outstanding principles of professionalism, honor, and dedication to duty that has marked his tenure as Commanding Officer.

Lord, be also with CAPT _____ as he assumes the awesome responsibility of command. Provide him confidence and wisdom in his lonely moments of command decision making. Now God, bless these proceedings and all who witness today this great ceremony of honor. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Eternal God, we thank You this morning for Your presence among us during this time honored celebration. Place now Your blessing upon this change of command and upon these two men who have sacrificially chosen a life of service to others.

Go now with CAPT _____ and his wife _____ as they leave our midst to accept a new challenge in their service to our great nation. Love them God, lead them and reward their diligence with rest and many years of happiness together. Thank You for their profound influence upon our lives. Allow memories of them to burn fondly within our hearts.

We also beseech You to put a special blessing upon CAPT _____ as he assumes command of USS _____. All him to feel your presence daily upon his life. Give him divine guidance as he leads our young sailors through the often turbulent waters of life. Lord, have Your hand also upon his wife _____ and upon his children, _____ and _____. Help them to accept the strenuous demands that will be place upon husband and father as Commanding Officer. Send Your spirit of comfort to them, bridging their hearts and souls across the vast expanse of ocean and sea during times deployment.

Thank You Lord for receiving our prayers today. Bless all who are assembled here this morning as we continue to faithfully serve Our Navy, Our Country, and You, Our God. Amen.

INVOCATION FOR POSTING AND RELIEF OF SERGEANT MAJOR, USMC

Eternal God, as we assemble together this morning to observe the posting and relief of our battalion Sergeants Major, we seek Your face and ask your presence to be among us. In behalf of our departing SGTMAJ _____, we request Your blessing and protection as he travels to his new duty assignment at _____. We thank You for his influence upon our lives and for his friendship.

Bless him in the challenges he will soon face and allow memories of him to burn fondly within our hearts.

Lord, in behalf of SGTMAJ _____, our incoming SGTMAJ, we also request Your blessing. As You blessed Your servant Solomon with wisdom, bless also SGTMAJ _____. Give him guidance as he leads our young Marines and allow him to feel your presence daily upon his life. Now thank You Lord for hearing our prayers. Bless Sergeants Major _____ and _____ they continue to serve our Country and Corps. Amen.

INVOCATION FOR CHANGE OF OFFICER IN CHARGE; PSD

Eternal God, we request Your presence among us this afternoon during this significant Change of Charge ceremony. As the baton of leadership is passed at Personal Support Detachment, _____ may this awesome responsibility be coupled with Your blessing and wisdom, and a consciousness of Your presence.

This afternoon, we ask that a special blessing be placed upon CDR _____. We are grateful for her professionalism, impeccable example, and dedication to duty. Her positive influence has substantially contributed to the welfare of all NAS, _____ sailors, along with hundreds of family members. May all who remain at PSD, _____ honor her efforts by continuing to uphold the great heritage of excellence she has instilled during her tenure as Officer in Charge.

Lord, we also request that Your blessing be upon LCDR _____ as she accepts her new responsibilities as Officer in Charge at PSD, _____. Bestow upon her wisdom and patience. Give her confidence in the strenuous demands of command decision making. Be a lamp unto her feet and a light unto her path.

God, place now Your blessing upon these proceedings and upon these exemplary Naval officers. This we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

INVOCATION

Almighty God, as we begin this ceremony marking two important transitions, we pause to acknowledge Your role in our lives and all our undertakings. You, O God, are the giver and sustainer of our lives, the One who walks with us and guides us; the One who provides wisdom and strength as we face life's challenges. Today we thank You for the outstanding service CAPT _____ and his family have rendered to our country and for their many contributions to our Navy community.

We ask that Your blessing would go with them as they now leave us for new opportunities outside the Navy. As CAPT _____ assumes command, we ask for him Your guidance, wisdom, and help.

For those of us who follow his leadership, help us to give him our full loyalty and support. Whether it is ours to lead or to follow, to end or to begin, we know that You are there beside us, O God. And for Your faithfulness, we give You thanks. Amen.

BENEDICTION

May the Lord God, who has called us as his servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden and through perils unknown, give us strength to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that God's hand is leading us and God's love supporting us. Amen.

RETIREMENT/CHANGE OF COMMAND FOR NAVY PUBLIC WORKS CENTER

INVOCATION

Gracious God, we thank You for Your presence with us in every time and situation of life. We are grateful for Your help and support as the dreams of our youth are turned into the visions and

accomplishments of our adult years. We thank You for new challenges and opportunities that continually present themselves as we offer ourselves in service to You and to our fellow citizens.

This morning, as we recognize the retirement of CAPT _____, we celebrate his outstanding service to our country, and we gratefully acknowledge his family's faithful support. We pray that You will continue to bless them with new visions, opportunities and accomplishments to enrich their lives.

As CAPT _____ assumes command, we ask that You would guide him, give him wisdom for each decision, a caring spirit for those he leads, and loyal support from those whose task it will be to make his vision for this command a reality. We ask these things in Your holy name. Amen.

BENEDICTION

For those who now depart from us, we bid You go with our prayers that God may grant you new visions, along with the courage, wisdom and strength to fulfill them. Go with our thanks, our best wishes and our friendship. For those who pick up the mantle and labor on together, may God remain with us and bind us together as one in service to our country, our Navy, and to one another. Go in peace. Amen.

CHANGE OF COMMAND / RETIREMENT, U.S. NAVY BAND

Almighty God, as we begin this ceremony marking two important transitions, we lift our prayers to You on behalf of two special naval officers, their families, and the members of the Navy Band. We thank You for CAPT _____ and for his exceptionally distinguished service to our country. As he now relinquishes these final duties of a _____ year naval career, we ask your blessing upon him, his wife _____, and their family as they begin a new phase of their lives.

As LCDR _____ assumes his new duties, we ask for him Your guidance, wisdom and help. Be present also with his wife _____, and with his family as they share both the joys and burdens of this new assignment.

To the member of the Navy Band who serve under his leadership, grant the desire and ability to give their new leader full loyalty and support; that there may be harmony not only in the music they play, but in the way they relate to one another.

God of our beginnings and endings, hear these prayers, which we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

Lord God, we humbly ask Thy journeying blessings upon CAPT _____ and his family as they move along new paths of living. As they go, bless them with continuing memories, not only of the difficulties and sometime loneliness of life in the sea service, but of the rich memories as well - - recollections of achievements, friends, adventure, and yes, contributions to our country and the United States Navy.

As the mantle of responsibility is transferred to CAPT _____, bless him with the knowledge of Thy divine presence and grant that Your hand will be his stay and guide. Help all who work at this command, O Lord, to enhance his leadership and may he and his family enjoy this tour of duty. Amen.

OFFICER COMMISSIONING PRAYERS

ENSIGN COMMISSIONING

Lord God, our way of life in the Navy is referred to as a noble profession. And so it is! Its nobility springs from the dignity of commitment to peace and freedom; its professional character from the skill of those so noble - - from the raw heart of desire, patriotism and dedication.

On this day of commissioning of Chief _____, help us to be mindful and grateful not only for his giftedness and determination but also for the rich experience, training and knowledge he has gained through these many years in the enlisted ranks. We are equally thankful for the family support he has received, including that of those here today - - his father, _____, his wife, _____ and their sons _____ and _____.

Bless us all, O Lord, but especially bless Chief _____ and his family as he takes yet another significant step toward proudly serving his country in the U.S. Navy. In Your strong name we pray. Amen.

ENSIGN COMMISSIONING INVOCATION

Eternal God, today we celebrate past achievements and ask Your support in a new beginning. We assemble this afternoon to celebrate the commissioning of AMEC(AW) _____ as an Ensign in the United States Navy. Lord, You have not created man and woman beings who stand still in life.

They are intended always to be in the process of becoming. The more we enable ourselves to become, the more we fulfill our true mission in life.

Many men and women live too near the surface of their abilities, dreading to call upon their deepest resources. However, today we celebrate the accomplishments of a man who was willing to dig a little deeper, to strive a little harder, to reach out a little further in order to realize his full potential. So Lord, please place Your blessing upon _____, these proceedings and this ceremony of honor. Amen.

DEACTIVATION/DISESTABLISHMENT CEREMONIES

DEACTIVATION CEREMONY FOR MARINE CORPS SECURITY FORCE

INVOCATION

Eternal God, we thank You this evening for Your presence among us during this historic celebration. As we contemplate the deactivation of Marine Corps Security Force Company _____, a myriad of emotions floods our hearts and minds.

- **Pride:** in the extraordinary heritage of a young, but highly visible and efficient security company; a company of Marines who routinely demonstrated great professionalism while rendering support to the highest levels of the Atlantic Fleet Chain of Command.

- Anxiety: as these young Marines contemplate transitions to new billets, new geographical locations and new beginnings.
- Sorrow: as the last chapter is closed out in Marine Corps Security Force Company _____'s brief, but illustrious, legacy.

But Lord, do not allow hearts to grieve heavily, for great companies are not comprised of buildings, barracks, offices, parade fields, nor unit insignias, but of the tireless efforts of dedicated professionals. So Lord, we ask that this day be a celebration of the dynamic achievements of all present Security Force Company Marines and of former Security Force Company Marines who together built such a great heritage and who together helped pave the road to peace and freedom. This we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Thank You Lord for receiving our prayers this evening. Go now with these extraordinary Devil Dogs of Marine Corps Security Force Company as they accept new challenges in their service to the citizens of our great nation. May the proud heritage of Marine Corps Security Force Company burn fervently within the hearts and minds of every man and woman present today. May the legacy of these Marines shine brightly as a beacon of excellence to the generations of Marines who will follow.

Bless now Lord all who are assembled here this day as we continue to faithfully serve Our Corps, Our Country, and You, our God. Amen.

ADAPTATION FOR DISESTABLISHMENT OF AN AVIATION ATTACK SQUADRON

INVOCATION

Lord, it's hard to know how to pray on an occasion such as this. If we are honest, most of us would just about rather be any other place, doing any other thing than disestablishing this proud squadron. As we contemplate the disestablishment of Attack Squadron _____, a myriad of emotions floods our hearts and minds. Pride, in the extraordinary heritage of the Navy's oldest attack squadron, a pace setting squadron which battled for peace in every major United States conflict since 1934. Others Lord, may feel anxiety as they transition to new billets, new geographical locations and new beginnings.

But Lord, do not allow hearts to grieve too heavily, for great squadrons are not comprised of aircraft, hangers, carrier decks nor airfields but of the tireless efforts of dedicated professionals.

So Lord, we ask that this ceremony be a celebration of the dynamic achievements of all present (Mascot Name) and of former (Mascot Name) who together helped pave the road to peace and freedom around the globe. This we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

DECOMMISSIONING INVOCATION

O Lord, Our Heavenly Father, we invoke Your divine blessing as we gather to decommission this United States Ship. She has rendered many years of distinguished service on behalf of freedom loving

peoples and has upheld the highest traditions of the our Navy. We pay respect and tribute to the sailors who sailed her on the high seas in times of war and peace. We express our gratitude for the preservation of this ship from the dangers of the sea, and the violence of the enemy and for bringing her safely to this hour. May we, like her, live our lives with a similar devotion that when our tour on earth is over, we may hear Your "Well Done." In Your holy name we pray. Amen.

Almighty God, we pray for Your divine blessings upon us as we have gathered to bid farewell to a grand lady of the sea. She has been a sister and a mother to many a seafarer. She is a proud lady in her haze gray coat. She bears her years well. We will miss her! For every sailor who walked her decks, for every engineer who gave her life, and for every officer who guided her, we give thanks. May they have fond memories of this lady, who brought romance and responsibility into their lives.

We ask that the unselfish spirit of _____ who gave her his name, live on in each of us. We pray that when we are called upon to defend liberty, we will quickly heed the call, and if necessary give our all that others may have the blessings that we now enjoy. May the sacrifice of and the thousands like him, not soon be forgotten, but ever be our example.

And now, Eternal Father, be with every sailor, every marine, their families and their loved ones. Grant our leaders Your wisdom, and grant us Your continued presence and love. Amen.

RETIREMENT CEREMONIES

ADMIRAL RETIREMENT CEREMONY PRAYERS

Contributed by Chaplain John Gundlach, CAPT, CHC, USN

INVOCATION

Eternal God, You faithfully watch over us and guide us all the days of our lives. You are there for us from beginning to end. Like a loving Parent, You share our joy as we bask in the warm glow of our successes; moreover You walk faithfully beside us as we tread the dark and lonely places that are also part of our life's experiences. Because You have been with us in all our yesterdays, we know that we can trust You with all our tomorrows.

Confident of Your loving care, we come to You now in prayer on behalf of an outstanding leader, shipmate, and friend, Admiral _____. As Admiral _____ concludes an exceptionally distinguished career, and he and his wife, _____ begin a new phase of their lives together, we ask Your blessing upon them. Together, they have given much to our country, and today we honor them for their service.

As they leave us, O God, strengthen them with the assurance of Your abiding presence, and by our continuing friendship and best wishes. We ask these things in Your holy name. Amen.

BENEDICTION

And now, O God, grant that we who have gathered for this occasion may depart in joy and in peace. Preserve the ties which bind us one to another as shipmates and friends, though we may be scattered like seeds in the wind. Guide us by Your Spirit, help us to live by Your standards, and grant us Your blessing as we endeavor to serve You and others through our service to our country. Amen.

Contributions by Chaplain John Gundlach continued . . .

RETIREMENT OF NAVY CAPTAIN

INVOCATION

Gracious God, as we begin this ceremony marking the retirement of CAPT _____ from active naval service, we pause to give You thanks. We gratefully acknowledge CAPT _____'s 30 years of exceptionally distinguished service to our country; we pay tribute to his family for their faithful support; and we thank You, O God, for sustaining them through every challenge, hardship, and danger. Today, we ask You to support and bless them as they begin a new phase of their lives. Strengthen them with the assurance of Your presence, and by our continuing friendship. May this ceremony remind us all of Your unfailing loving kindness which supports us in every time and circumstance of our lives. We ask these things in Your holy name. Amen.

BENEDICTION

(Adapted from "The Prayer of a Midshipman")

Almighty God, whose way is in the sea, whose paths are in the great waters, whose command is over all and whose love never fails: let us be aware of Your presence and obedient to your will. Keep us true to our best selves, guarding us against dishonesty in purpose and in deed, and helping us so to live that we can stand unashamed and unafraid before our shipmates, our loved ones, and You.

Protect those in whose love we live. Give us the will to do our best and to accept our share of responsibilities with a strong heart and a cheerful mind. Make us considerate of those entrusted to our leadership and faithful to the duties our country has entrusted to us. Let our uniforms remind us daily of the traditions of the service of which we are a part. If we are inclined to doubt, steady our faith; if we are tempted, make us strong to resist; if we should miss the mark, give us courage to try again. Guide us with the light of truth and give us strength to faithfully serve You, now and always. Amen.

GENERAL PRAYER ADAPTED TO A RETIREMENT CEREMONY

INVOCATION

Eternal God, we begin this prayer as we begin all prayers: with gratitude. Therefore, we express gratitude today:

- for a life of variety and possibility,
- for a soul of sensitivity and searching,
- for friends of depth and commitment to great causes,
- for opportunities that broaden and deepen,
- for loved ones that require and inspire,
- for challenges that search and test.

Lord of this moment and all moments, You see the long march of human history, and stretch forth Your hand in love to mark the passage -- we now declare that, this day is not like other days. This day we mark with ceremony, we gather together from the diversity of our vocations, and close the distance between us in order to speak as one in honor of an able shipmate and trusted friend.

Therefore, we reach beyond ourselves to invoke Your name and presence, so that we can reach within ourselves and speak the language of the heart. So, we pray for _____ and his wife _____ and their family today:

- May they look back with few regrets,
- May they look forward with hope and confidence,
- May they look around them with gratitude and joy,
- May they look within with purpose and resolve,
- May they look up with expectation and faithfulness.

In Your name we pray. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Eternal God, there is an exodus in each of our lives, a time when the uncharted waters stretch out before us. O God of all our journeys, and each of our life's story, deepen our awareness of your faithful presence with us. May we always treasure these moments of ceremony, this ritual of letting go -- we ask especially for _____ and _____ that the fruits of their choices will be blessed, that the pain and pleasure of change, and this act of moving on will be forever a part of our story too. We pray that they will always abide in the shelter of your unfailing love. Amen.

Contributions by Chaplain Gerald J. Blackburn, CDR, CHC, USN

RETIREMENT PRAYER FOR A CWO4

INVOCATION

Let us pray.

Lord God, on this retirement occasion, we offer our heartfelt gratitude for all military and civil service personnel, their families and loved ones, who endure the rigors of regular change of station moves and a lifestyle that is often arduous -- all in the service of our nation. Encourage and sustain us all in the noble calling and vocation of peacekeeping and peacemaking in Your world.

Today we honor one among us who is retiring from this special calling. We are thankful for Chief Warrant Officer - Four _____. We are grateful for his dedication and professionalism that has characterized his 27 years of faithful service. Bless us all, but especially this tireless shipmate whom we honor today.

In Your strong name we pray. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Let us pray.

Eternal God, our prayer is a request for journeying blessings for Chief Warrant Officer _____, his wife _____, their children _____, _____, and _____.

We ask Your blessings upon this Navy family as they make yet another significant change and adjustment in their pilgrimage together. Help them to find in You the guidance and strength needed to navigate in the civilian community.

And as they go, bless them with memories not only of the difficulties and sometime loneliness of being a transient Navy family, but of the good memories, personal and family achievements, friends, adventure, and contributions in the service of their country through the United States Navy.

In gratitude we pray. Amen

AN AVIATOR'S RETIREMENT INVOCATION

*An adaptation of "A Surface Sailor's Prayer"
by Chaplain Robert Ecker, CAPT, CHC, USN*

Let us pray.

Lord God, there is not a lot to say about Naval aviators. There is not a lot that need be said. The clouds themselves are their tribute. They choose the sky as their companion. They blend human skill and steel into a harmony of movement, grace and beauty that matches the blue canopy itself. And they go to sea on flat top ships not for commerce trade or solely for pleasure, but for the sake of justice. They go not on their own terms but on the terms of the sea and sky. They taste their beauty, massiveness, immensity and timelessness. They return from these journeys humble of heart, stronger of spirit.

Today we honor one who has flown the sky and sailed the seas. We honor his spouse and daughter who have kept vigil.

We pray only, Lord, that CDR _____, his wife _____ and daughter _____ -- and all aviators, their spouses and children -- those who touch the sky and sea, may feel reverence for You who created it all and us. Amen.

Contributions by CDR Gerald J. Blackburn

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER RETIREMENT

INVOCATION

Eternal God, Creator of land, sky, and sea, grant to us gathered here, a deeper appreciation for those who serve as Chief Petty Officers in the United States Navy. To all of them who are called to lead, bless with strength of purpose and courage. Keep them:

- firm, but understanding,
- wise and yet ever-learning,
- brave, but not foolhardy.

May they be rocks of confidence and trust for those who follow them. Our special invocation prayer today is for Thy divine blessing upon Master at Arms Chief Petty Officer _____ who leaves us here at the command and from the Navy he has faithfully served. Bless us all in this special tribute and farewell ceremony, but especially bless the Chief on this, his day. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Let us pray.

Lord, our prayer is a request for journeying blessings upon Master at Arms Chief Petty Officer _____. Bless him as he turns yet another significant page in his life. Guide him as he moves forward along a new path of living in the civilian sector. And as he goes, bless him with memories not only of the difficulties and sometime loneliness of life in the sea service, but of the good memories, achievements, friends, adventures and contributions in the service of his country and the United States Navy. Amen.

Contribution by Chaplain Michael Parisi, LCDR, CHC, USN

GENERAL RETIREMENT CEREMONY PRAYERS

INVOCATION

Father, we invoke Your name as we gather to mark LCDR _____'s retirement. We thank You for the blessings of peace and security You have given to our Navy and to our country through his 23 years of faithful service. LCDR _____ leaves us a precious example of integrity, devotion to duty, and concern for the people the Navy entrusted to his care and to his leadership. May his legacy, Lord, inspire us who remain on active duty to serve as honorably and as selflessly, and always to place first the needs of those we lead, and of the nation we serve. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Lord of earth and sea and sky, we ask you to bless LCDR _____ as he bids farewell to active duty in his country's naval service. May he always take pride in his accomplishments and contributions in uniform. Grant him and his family much happiness in the next chapter of their lives. May their Navy memories always bring smiles to their faces. May their friendships warm their hearts, and may peace and love dwell in their home. Amen

A GENERAL RETIREMENT INVOCATION

Lord, we live in such a troubled world. Our newspapers are filled with reports of social, economic and political unrest. However today, we put all this bad news behind us to celebrate instead some truly good news. For today we unite together to honor 25 years of dedicated service rendered by Petty Officer _____ to the United States Navy and to the citizens of our great nation. We truly rejoice with Petty Officer _____ on this, his day of transfer to the Fleet Reserve.

We are grateful for Petty Officer _____'s professionalism, example, and sacrificial dedication to duty. May we who remain in uniform honor him by continuing to uphold the great heritage of service he has performed during his 25 years of naval service and that he now passes on to us today. Now Lord, bless again Petty Officer _____, his assembled family, shipmates, and guests; bless these proceedings and also this ceremony of honor. In Your holy name we pray. Amen

A lot of men serve with honor . . . a lot of men come and go. Their spot is soon filled and the memory fades. Occasionally an unusual person emerges whose qualities are obvious. He makes all of us proud of what we are because of what he is. Such a man is (Name,) soon to be retired. Some of you may not know him but most of you do. We pray the Lord may be with him... grant him Godspeed, fair winds, and following seas. Amen.

OTHERS

NAVY BIRTHDAY

Let us pray.

Almighty God, we reverently pause to lift our hearts in praise and prayer. Bless us with Thy divine presence as we gather here to celebrate our Navy's birthday.

We thank You for the loyal men, women and families of our Navy who have served and are serving with unwavering courage and dedication. Be mindful, O Lord, of our shipmates who are standing watch throughout the world, away from home and their loved ones. Uphold them in the hollow of Thy hand and protect them from all harm.

Eternal God, we are grateful for, and pause to honor, our shipmates who made the great sacrifices and have completed their tours of duty. May they now rest from their labors and abide with Thee.

Bless us with the courage to carry out our duties in honor and not break the trust of our fallen compatriots. Draw us all together in one united will to serve Thee, our nation, and our Navy. We ask this in Thy holy name. Amen.

Almighty God, as we celebrate the birthday of the United States Navy _____ years ago today, we give You thanks for Your faithfulness in standing watch over us. With gratitude, we recall a rich heritage of service. Born to help win our nation's freedom, our Navy has ever since sailed the world's seas to ensure freedom for ourselves and our global neighbors.

As we gather here today, we remember that even now thousands of our shipmates serve on our behalf in difficult or hostile surroundings, away from home and family, on ships at sea, and on foreign shores. O God, we ask You to guard and guide them as they do their duty; and bring them home safely to those who await their return.

Eternal God, as our Navy sails in the uncharted waters of the future, help us to do so with confidence. Though there is no chart to guide us, for others have never been where we will go, give us the courage to successfully meet every challenge which confronts us - - just as our forebearers did in their time. Guide us by the star of faith, by the compass of eternal values, and by the pride of living up to the rich legacy of our traditions.

God, bless the United States Navy, and all the men and women who are its life's blood. May we serve You and our country in a manner that will bring honor to both. These things we pray, with thanksgiving for the past and with hope for the future on this, our Navy's _____ birthday. Amen

Eternal God, we celebrate our birthday today. Not our individual birthdays or even that special birthday of our ship. Rather, we celebrate the birthday of our Navy, a formidable force in war, a potent power in peace. For over two hundred years men have accepted the rigors of our nation's naval service often without either adequate pay or the recognition by their nation which they rightfully deserved. They often endured cramped quarters and unpalatable food. They were often tossed about in those sailing vessels we speak of romantically, but in which few of us would have signed on for a second four. They knew the biting cold, fiercely blowing wind and burning sun. When they turned from sail to steam they were covered with the dirt and grime of coal. So much of what made their lives a constant hardship has been changed. But some things haven't changed, and we share their sorrows and their joys. We share the mystical experience of the sea so hard to describe to someone who has never known it. We share the disciplined training in preparing for events we hope will never happen. We share their sadness at leaving those we love and their joy in returning to them again. We share their conviction that no other job would be quite so satisfying as serving at sea with men we respect and admire. We share their sense of adventure in looking forward to new ports and as yet unsailed seas. And we share their faith that You are our strength, our very present help in time of trouble, our maker, defender, redeemer and friend Amen.

GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY PRAYER

INVOCATION

Almighty God, You are the giver of every good and perfect gift. And You make us stewards over what You provide, telling us to use wisely the resources you place in our hands. Nowhere is that trust and that wisdom more important than in our use of what is not our own -- our use of that which had been given by our fellow Americans. Today, as we break ground for the Acquisition Center for Excellence, we pray that this would be a place where wisdom and vision may prevail; a place where new and more effective ways may be found to do the government's business, so that the public good may be furthered. We offer this prayer to You, O God, asking Your blessing and Your help in these endeavors. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Today we have spoken about what we envision and what we intend to happen in this place. Now it is time to build and to act. Each of us must do our part, working together to make our vision a reality. May God's blessing be upon us, each one, as we fulfill our role as stewards of what God and the people of our nation have entrusted to us. Amen.

Contributions by Chaplain Gerald J. Blackburn

BUILDING RENOVATION RIBBON-CUTTING PRAYER

Almighty God, giver of all good things: we thank You for those who design, build, and renovate the places where we live and work. On this occasion we are especially grateful for all minds and hands that have labored to make the work-spaces and barrack rooms of _____ a better, more attractive place.

Lord of our going out and coming in, give to those who will live and labor here a place where they are encouraged to do their very best, and when evening comes, a place of relaxation and the precious gift of restful sleep, that they may awake refreshed and renewed for their service to You and their Country. Amen.

PRAYER FOR A DINING-IN

Eternal God, we are thankful for traditions such as this dining-in that make for comradeship. Bless those who are new to this wardroom and go with those who will over the weeks and months ahead leave for new assignments. We must also remember all those who have served in the USS _____ in the past. Remind us, dear God, that we always follow in the steps of many who have distinguished themselves and prepared the way for us. Grant to these, we pray, and to all shipmates in our Navy, courage, commitment, honor, strength and skill as they serve in the defense of our country and the maintenance of justice among the nations. Sustain us in the hour of danger, grant that wherever we serve we may be loyal to high sea service traditions, and that at all times we may put our trust in You.

And now, O Lord, we pause at this time of grace to express our gratitude for our daily blessings, for the people around us, and for the food which has been prepared. Amen.

PRAYER FOR A DINING-OUT

Let us pray.

Eternal God, on this joy filled evening, make us mindful of those who have friends but no food, and those who have food but no friends. We are thankful that in our Navy and Marine Corps family here at _____ we have both.

So with the friendship, fun, food and drink of this evening, may we be nourished both physically and socially in a way that refreshes mind and spirit that we might continue to do our jobs in a way that brings honor to our Navy, our country and ourselves. Amen.